

Eugene F. Abbott.

April 20, 1906.

THE SOUL-WINNING CHURCH

G.M. Elliott Library
Cincinnati Christian University
2700 Glenway Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45204-3200

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Revival of a Dead Church

Paper, 15 cts; Cloth, 30 cts., net.

Up From Sin or the Fall and Rise of a
Prodigal

Paper, 15 cts; Cloth, 30 cts. net.

God's Will and My Life

A devotional study of God's will for our lives.

Vellum Cloth, 25 cts,



Fleming H. Revell Company Publishers

THE SOUL-WINNING CHURCH

BY

REV. LEN. G. BROUGHTON, D.D.

AUTHOR OF

*"The Second Coming of Christ," "The Revival of a Dead Church,"
"Up from Sin," "Old Wine in New Bottles," "The
Representative Women of the Bible and the
Representative Women of To-day," etc.*

"He that winneth souls is wise."

Proverbs xi. 30.



SECOND EDITION. REVISED AND ENLARGED

LONDON CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

260
B 87545
1905

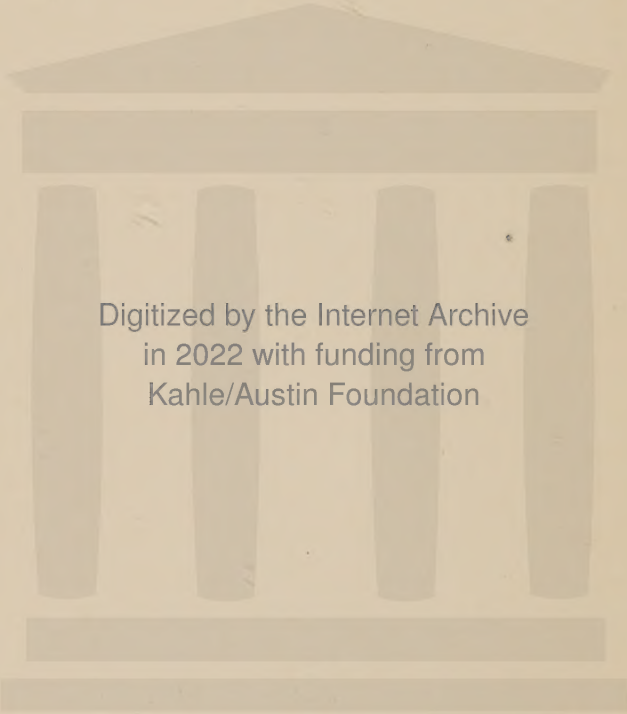
Copyright, 1905, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
THIRD EDITION

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 63 Washington Street
Toronto: 27 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

DEDICATION

To my Friends at Westminster Chapel, London,
where these Addresses were delivered

THE AUTHOR



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

PREFACE

THIS little book is made up of a series of addresses which have been delivered in churches, conferences, and conventions throughout America and England. They have been greatly blessed of God in arousing the spirit of soul-winning in the individual and the church.

Here and there they have been stenographically reported, and are now gathered up and put in this permanent form.

They are not without fault. The scholastic element is totally lacking in them ; but it is hoped that they will be the means of stimulating Christians and churches to do better soul-winning, and thus to fulfil the will of our Father.

LEN. G. BROUGHTON.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE CHURCH AND ITS BEGINNING	11
II. THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION	19
III. THE CHURCH AND ITS DOCTRINE	40
IV. THE CHURCH AND ITS LIFE . .	50
V. THE CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS	62
VI. THE CHURCH AND ITS PRAYERS	73
VII. THE CHURCH AND ITS EXPERI- ENCE	85
VIII. THE CHURCH AND ITS POWER .	96
IX. THE CHURCH AND ITS CO-PART- NERSHIP	107
X. THE CHURCH AND ITS FINAL HOPE	116
XI. THE CHURCH AND ITS FELLOW- SHIP	127

The Soul-Winning Church

I.

THE CHURCH AND ITS BEGINNING

“And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”—ACTS ii. 41.

MY reason for addressing you on this subject is twofold:

First, because there are so many who profess Christ and remain out of the church.

Of course, I am to be understood as referring here to the church as a local body. The spiritual Church is one thing, and the local church organisation another. A soul is in the Church spiritual upon a profession of Christ; but is not in the local church until he gives himself to it.

I find that many converts are indifferent about church-membership. Not half of those who profess Christ in meetings ever

consider seriously the question of joining a church. They will attend its services, receive its benefits, and sometimes support its objects, but never contemplate actual vital connection with it. *Surely something is wrong when a convert refuses church-membership.*

Second, because there are many who *are* connected with the church who seemingly have little regard for the sacredness of its obligations. Perhaps this is one reason why the young convert is also indifferent about it. A child convert said to her teacher not long ago: "Why should I join the church? Papa says he is a Christian, and he has his church letter and won't put it in the church." Such slack, twisted indifference on the part of those who have gone into the church very naturally has a chilling effect upon the young convert, whether he is conscious of it or not. If only those who are now in the church could be made to *realise the sacredness of church obligations* it would not be necessary that I speak to you on this line. Jesus said: "But whoso shall offend one

of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6). Finding so many of this kind, may it not be necessary that we face a few important questions concerning the Church?

I. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH.

—The Church is in no sense a human institution. Its principles were founded by Christ, and its organisation perfected by His Apostles.

The ascension of Christ left His followers with no bond of external union. To be sure, they had the recollection of His commands to unity and love. They continued to meet and worship and wait for "the promise of the Father" (Acts i. 4)—the outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit upon them. But there was no regular organisation of the Church until the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit who came that day rested upon them, and cemented them into a compact organisation. *The Church was brought forth by the Holy Spirit of God. This*

being true, it is enough to challenge the highest respect and closest affiliation of every believer in Christ.

II. THE DIVINE CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP.—The Church being a Divine organisation, we may naturally conclude that it has Divine conditions for membership. Let us see what these are: We need to go no further than the account given of its organisation to get an answer to this question. "Then they that gladly received His Word were baptised; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 41, 42).

From this we see that the first condition of church-membership is *the reception of the Word*. Peter preached to them salvation through Christ. This they had heard and received. No church has a right to receive for membership any except such as receive the salvation of Jesus, and none such have a right to remain out of the church. *Do you accept*

the salvation of Jesus? If so, the church is your place.

The next step in the Divine condition is baptism. "Then they that gladly received His Word were baptised" (Acts ii. 41).

The Divine order everywhere laid down is, "Repent, believe, and be baptised." Baptism, like faith, is to be a conscious act. Aside from a positive command, it naturally follows faith. Its significance is twofold. (1) It is our open declaration of faith in the salvation of Jesus Christ. (2) It is our open declaration of having passed from the old into the new life. Baptism is in no sense a saving ordinance. We are saved alone by receiving Jesus Christ. Baptism is a positive command to those who are saved. It is one of the conditions for membership in the Church militant; and no soul has a right to refuse it.

III. THE DIVINE OBLIGATION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.—It follows that if the Church has a Divine origin and Divine conditions for membership, it also has Divine obligations. So again we need go no further than the holy

record of the first church to see what they are:

(1) Continuance in *the Apostles' teaching*. The primary purpose of the church is to set forth the Divine teaching. The mere enunciation of truth is not sufficient. To be most effective, truth must be incarnate; it must live in men. The soul having accepted the Divine teaching, and come into the church, is expected to continue to set it forth by every means of proclamation.

(2) Continuance in "*Fellowship*"—literally, Companionship. They came into the church agreeing every one to carry his part of the work. It was Christian communism—a communism of interests. They agreed not only in caring for the church and the spread of the teaching, but also to look after one another's needs.

(3) Continuance in "*Breaking of Bread.*" This is a direct reference to the Lord's Supper. Like Baptism, it was instituted by our Lord Himself, and is His positive command. It looks back to His broken body and shed blood; and forward to His second coming.

"As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

(4) Continuance in "*Prayers.*" The first church was a perpetual prayer-meeting. They lived the prayer-life. They had been taught by Jesus to pray for everything, and everywhere. There is no more important service in the church. If prayer is worth anything, it must be the most important part of anything.

IV. THE DIVINE BLESSING.—This we want now to trace.

(1) There is the blessing that comes through *obedience*. The church exists, not for *some* believers; it was made for *all*. For a soul to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus and then refuse the fellowship of His Church and the practice of His ordinances is an inconsistency without parallel. Surely one may not expect his full share of the blessing who wilfully ignores this requirement.

(2) There is the blessing that comes from *a sense of having done right*. I know nothing more comforting and strengthening than

this pervading consciousness. It will be power to any man. He will feel it himself, and others will see it. The man who halts is ever a defeated man. It is only the man who comes out in the open that has power.

(3) There is the blessing of a *church home*. Every man needs such a home. He needs it for himself. He needs it for his family. He needs his regular place and form of worship. How much I have seen this, in mixing with strange congregations! We need the regular instruction of the church. We need its sympathy and help. Our condition may not call for it now, but the time will come when it will be keenly felt. We ought to have our church home.

There are TWO CONCLUSIONS that naturally follow:—

(1) If you are in the church, let it mean more to you from this hour. Attend it, support it, pray for it, and push it.

(2) If you are a believer in Christ, do not stay out of the church one day longer. God requires it; your interest demands it; and the world expects it.

II THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

“As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.”

—JOHN XX. 21.

HERE we have the supreme mission of the church. I come to it with two questions—First: What is the mission of the church? Second: How can this mission be best realised?

I. WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?
—IT IS NOT POLITICAL. The mission of the church is in no sense political, and yet not for one moment do I believe that it, therefore, has no business in public affairs. I believe the church of Jesus Christ is concerned with everything in this world that affects humanity; that it cannot fully serve the purpose of the Master and withhold its influence from anything and everything that touches the needs of the human race. As a Christian and a church member, I am interested in everything in this world that in any sense

20 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

affects the weal of men; and I believe that the Church has made a mistake in supposing that, because she is not bidden to meddle with governmental affairs as an ecclesiastical machine, she is to keep her mouth shut and her hands folded with reference to the problems that the State presents to the Church for solution. And yet, never let us imagine that this is *the* work of a church. It is only one of the sides-issues.

IT IS NOT INSTITUTIONAL. There are some who think a church should be a kind of humanitarian institution; that its business is to clean up the communities in which we live, for the good of humanity; that we are to feed the hungry, to clothe the sick, and nurse them, and house them, and doctor them, and the like.

I would not say a word to discourage anyone in such work, for in our own sphere in Atlanta we have all kinds of institutions for the care of people who are in need, and God has greatly blessed our efforts in this respect. But there is much danger in all this humanitarian work, in the "institu-

tional church" idea. If we do not mind, we shall get on a side-track, and the great work of the church will be overlooked. Let us see to it that this institutional work of ours, whatever it may be, is keyed upon the idea of the salvation of the lost souls of men and women.

IT IS NOT EDUCATIONAL. There are others who would have us believe that the purpose of a church is to educate the people, and hence to-day you can raise any amount of money for education. In the city of Atlanta some time ago, we raised \$250,000 in three weeks with which to endow a university; and yet in that same city we find it hard to raise \$1,000 as a guarantee fund for a great religious campaign. Now, I would not say a word against education. I believe in education, and the very best education; and I realise the fact that in both countries there are many things that we would like to have our educational institutions to do that they cannot do; and that very fact makes it necessary that the church shall be interested in educational work. But let us never imag-

22 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

ine that education is salvation, nor that education is the primary work of the church.

IT IS NOT SHEEP FEEDING. Again, there are others who would have us believe that the church's business to-day is to run a kind of sheep pasture, to educate, and then to elevate the saints; and hence we are hearing a great deal about "feeding the sheep." People are going to all sorts of conventions and conferences, staying a long time, paying a great deal of money and all that; and it is well. I thank God for the conference movement, but I cannot help seeing its dangers. And one of them is that people get into the habit of being fed, fed, fed all the time, and yet all the time crying out for food—spiritual food! Why, the prayers that we hear, the prayers that we all make, indicate that: "O Lord, feed us to-day!" There is a craze to-day to be "fed"!

But there is something to be done before the sheep-feeding process begins—a very important thing to be done—and Jesus Christ has recognised that fact in establishing His Church and providing for it. A sheep has

got to be made before it can be fed; and there is but one thing in this world that God can make a sheep out of, and that is a goat. We are all goats to start with, and, alas! many of us are goats to end with!

THE SALVATION OF SINNERS. Now, with all this said, seriously let us face the great question—the supreme mission of the Church, what is it? To get at the supreme mission of the Church we must get back to Jesus Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, “As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.” These disciples represented His Church. The mission of Jesus was to be the mission of those disciples, and the mission of those disciples is to be the mission of the Church at large.

What was the mission of Jesus to this earth? Thank God, He tells us—“To seek and to save that which was lost.” The true mission of every church, then, is the mission of salvation for lost souls—nothing else. Everything else must step aside for this one thing; and when anything gets in the way of the accomplishment of this, it must be put

24 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

aside. *The one thing for which Jesus instituted the Church was the salvation of the lost.*

II. HOW IS THE CHURCH TO BECOME A GREAT SOUL-WINNING INSTITUTION, and so fulfil its mission? I am going to tell you three things that I regard as fundamental.

(1) In order that a church may become a soul-winning institution it must realise that there is *something to save men from*. We hear a great deal about the something to save men to: to a life of respectability, to home, to heaven. We hear very little these days of the *something to save men from*.

A friend of mine tells this story: In Jersey City a family was at the breakfast-table one morning, when suddenly there was a cry of fire, and the whole family rushed out into the yard. When they were safe in the yard, the wife said: "Oh, there is that old sideboard. I don't mind losing the house and everything in it, but I do hate to lose that sideboard!"

"Well," said the husband, "I think we can get that out"; and he and the son went back into the dining-room. The husband

got on the front side of it and the son on the rear, and they pulled and pushed until, finally, they got it to the front door, and then they wedged it in the door so that no one could either get it out or in. The poor boy was blocked by it on the inside of the house, and there was no chance for him to escape. The father, realising the sad situation, jumped off the front porch and ran around to the back of the house. As he came to the window, over which there were several bars of iron, he saw through it his boy standing there, and heard him screaming. Do you know what that father did? He seized those bars of iron, jerked them off, and reached in and got his boy, pulled him out of the window, and delivered him to his mother.

This friend of mine said he told a preacher that story, and this preacher one Sunday night concluded he would use it at the close of his sermon as an appeal to the unconverted. Thinking of the fitness of the illustration he forgot to tell one important thing about it. He described a family sitting at the breakfast table, when suddenly they all jumped up

26 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

and ran out of the house, and all at once the wife said, "Oh, there is my sideboard." He told how the father and son went back to get it, and how they got that sideboard wedged tight in the door, blocking the boy on the inside. Then how the father ran around to the back of the house, jerked off the iron bars, rushed in, got his boy and pulled him out, and delivered him to his mother. When the preacher finished everybody was looking at everybody else; everybody was looking strange, and everybody felt strange, and he was greatly surprised. Returning home, he said to his wife: "Wife, why was it that that story of mine didn't hit? I never saw people act so strangely in my life under as good a story as that. Not one single solitary soul moved!" "Why," she said, "you told the story all right, only you forgot to say the house was on fire!"

You think that is a very ridiculous picture. Well, it is. Yet I want to tell you that just such things as this are occurring in a large number of pulpits Sunday after Sunday. We talk to people about salvation, and never

press upon them the great fact that there is something to save them from. Brethren, I believe that the preaching of the future is to be a preaching of law as well as of love. I believe that it is necessary to make men feel the awfulness of sin before you can ever make them feel the need of the love and salvation of Christ.

I know this is not popular. Some time ago I was holding a series of meetings in a certain State out west, and one night there came into the service a committee from a very distinguished church of our denomination. I did not know they were in the church until after they had gone. That night I preached on the Judgment. They came back the next night to sample me. Oh, this sampling business! I did not know they were there that night either, and I preached on Hell. The next night they came again, unknown to me, and I preached on the Blood. Shortly afterwards this committee had a meeting. There were twenty-seven on the committee, and I got two votes; somebody else got twenty-five; and when they wrote me

28 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

about it, here is what they said: "We enjoyed you, glad to have had you here in our midst, but your theology had too much blood in it, and your sermon too much law. We are living to-day under love and not law." I began to make some investigations about that church, and I found that they had not received a soul on confession of faith in over three years, and I was not surprised. Men must be made to feel that there is *something the matter* before they can be brought to see the necessity of a Saviour.

(2) We must realise the fact that we have got *something to save men with*. Thank God for the remedy! Not only to save men with, but something that does not need any human addition; something that will just work itself, if you will give it half a chance, and that is salvation by the blood of Jesus. Oh, I am so glad of my confidence in this salvation! When I am brought to stand side by side with a poor sinner, when I see the tears running down his cheeks, and hear him begging for salvation, I am so glad that I can just stand there and know—not believe,

but *know*—that I have got a remedy that will save him on the spot. There is a good deal of ethical preaching nowadays in our country. We have a preacher in our own city now, drawing large crowds, who does not hesitate to say that salvation is a process, that the idea of a sinner coming into a meeting and going out a saint is ridiculous. Thank God, I know better than that. I know it because I have felt it. I know it because I have seen it.

I remember well a man we once had in our city. I think he was the worst man I ever saw in my life. He was known as the worst gambler in town, an outlaw, a rum-seller, and everything else you can say about a man that is bad. One day I heard he had gone before the city council for a license to sell rum near our church, and I hurried down to the city council and asked the mayor if I might speak to that body.

He said: “Yes; you may speak, but I do not think you will have any influence on that subject. I think they have about made up their minds what they are going to do.”

30 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

"All right," I said; "I will throw some light on it at least." And I proceeded to throw some light, and it was a very good searchlight, too. I said: "Gentlemen of the council, this man who sits here is the worst man I ever saw; he is the worst man in this town. It won't do to trust him with a license to sell rum. He is damning more men than any institution in this city."

As I proceeded, the man got mad. Of course, it was not very pleasant for a man to hear such things about himself. When I finished and started for home a deacon of my church came to me and said:

"You had better go down another street. I just heard that man say he was going to deal with you, if he came up with you."

I said, "Tell me, deacon, did they give him his license?"

"No, they refused; refused unanimously, and that is the thing he is so mad about."

Two or three days after that I got a message from the man that he was going to whip me if he caught me on his street. Well, most assuredly, I never went on that street

for six weeks. Finally, I went into my study one day. It was a very cold day. As I opened the door I saw this man seated by the fire. He looked up at me, and I looked down at him. I said, "Good-morning."

"Good-morning," he replied.

"It is a very cold day," I said.

"Yes, it is a very cold day."

Then I sat down. I did not know what else to do.

He said, "Dr. Broughton, I suppose I might as well get down to business."

"Yes."

"You remember that day when you made your speech in the city council?" he asked.

"Yes." And I felt it would not be long before I had to bear the fruit of it.

"Well," he continued, "I have been thinking about that a good deal. You know I said I was going to whip you the first time I caught you?"

"Yes, but you didn't mean it, did you?"

"Well, that is what I came here to talk to you about."

"All right, let us talk about it." I never

32 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

was so anxious to *talk* in my life as I was that day!

“Well,” he said, “I will tell you. I went home that night, and I was so mad that I started for your house two or three times. I thought I never could go through another night without giving you a whipping—a man that would stand up there and talk about me as you did, and defeat me in the one thing that I thought I had a right to have. But the more I thought about it, the more I felt that I deserved it.

“Last night one of my little children got down at the bedside and began to say his prayers. When I heard him pray, ‘O Lord, bless papa,’ I got to thinking about my mother’s prayers for me away back yonder in Virginia. Dr. Broughton, I had the best mother in the world; and to think that her boy, the baby boy she used to pray for, has gotten so low down that he can’t get a whisky license in Atlanta! I have come here to ask you if you won’t kneel and pray with me, and if possible don’t leave me until I am saved.”

Down we got and began to pray. I prayed; then he prayed. All at once he clapped his hands together. The remedy had worked—it did not take long—and he was saved. Then he said: “I have got three friends that have been with me in gambling schemes. I want them saved.” In less than three weeks all four of those gamblers were saved, saved with the remedy that did not need any human help. Oh, I rejoice that we have a Saviour and a salvation like that! And since we have got a remedy like this, why, in the name of Jesus, do we not use it?

(3) We must realise *the importance of the individual* in this matter of soul-winning. A friend of mine in New York, who is pastor of a large Presbyterian church, told me this experience. He became very much exercised on the subject of the salvation of his people. He had gone on for a year and more, and had seen practically nobody saved. One night he called his elders to meet him in the church, and they prayed together. Finally, he said: “Brethren, I have a proposition to

34 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

make to you. I wish to resign the pastorate of this church, because I do not believe God wants me to stay here. I am not having any souls saved."

"Oh," said one of the deacons, "we are greatly edified."

"Edified for what?" he asked. "You have been coming to me with such soothing compliments as that, and yet I don't see for what you have been edified. Now brethren, unless God gives us some souls here very soon, I am going to resign the pastorate of this church. And I want to say something to you also. You are the elders of this church, and I am going to start with you. Brother," turning to one, "do you believe that through you a soul was ever saved?"

And the elder replied, "No, pastor."

"Do you?" to another.

"No, pastor."

"Do you?"

"No, pastor"; and so all along the line.

"Now, brethren," he said, "I want to make this proposition to you: that unless God gives this church souls in the near

future, you will resign also as the elders of it."

"We are getting along very well," they said.

"No, we are not getting along at all!"

Finally they all knelt down and prayed together, and in that prayer a covenant was made that they would resign if the Lord did not give souls in the near future. They went to their homes; it was Saturday night.

Monday morning the elder first questioned by the pastor as to having been instrumental in soul-saving went into his store. The first man he met was his confidential clerk. He took him into his office, shut the door behind him, and said: "Bob, I have been a good master to you, haven't I?"

"Yes, sir, you have."

"Well, Bob, you have been with me for fifteen years. I am an elder in the church that you attend when you go anywhere. But you are not a Christian, and I know it, and have known it all the while, and yet I have never spoken a word to you about salvation personally. But, Bob, my soul is on fire

36 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

now, and I want us to get down here in this room and give ourselves, both of us, to Christ. I will give myself to Him for greater consecration; you give yourself to Him for salvation."

"Yes, sir; I will be only too glad to do it," and down they knelt. That man was saved. The elder called in another, and another, and another, and that one day he led eleven men to Christ. The next Sunday over thirty men were received into that church upon profession of faith; every one of them led to Jesus Christ by an official in the church who had up to that time never saved a soul.

Now, may God put it upon our hearts to start the work of soul-winning. Do not wait for somebody else to start it; do not wait for the great revival. I am sick and tired of hearing men pray for the coming of the great revival that ought to be here now. It is here now; all we have got to do is to get at it.

Will you pardon me for just this bit of personal testimony? I offer it to the glory of

God, and to help someone that has not had much experience.

We rarely ever go up from our church in Atlanta to our denominational association in the autumn without being able to report from one hundred and fifty to three hundred having been baptised during the past year into the church, besides the converts that go to other churches throughout the country. Now, how are those people saved? To start with, they are saved in the Sunday-school. Every Sunday-school teacher in that church realises that she or he is an evangelist; that the first thing to do is to save the unsaved in the class; and there is rarely a Sunday that souls are not saved in our Sunday-school. We will not have a teacher in the school that does not realise that to be the first business; never to be satisfied—I do not care how large the class is—until scholars are saved.

Then at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning we expect conversions. Now, you know that is a very unusual thing. If you want to see a sensation created in New York, or Boston, or Philadelphia, or any other large city that

38 CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

I know anything about, you step down out of the pulpit after the Sunday morning service and invite sinners to come to Christ; and if anybody should accept the invitation, that would add to the sensation. Is it not so? We have an idea that it is not the thing for sinners to get religion in the morning. If they will come out at night, like Nicodemus, in the dark, it is all right; but the idea of breaking up the dignity and formality of an eleven o'clock service with salvation is out of the question! Now, with us, we wind up the morning service with an appeal for salvation.

Then in the afternoon we have from five to ten mission stations, where children and grown people are gathered together, divided into classes; workers are sent out from the Tabernacle, just ordinary workers,—people who have no special training,—but whose souls are on fire for salvation; they go out and teach those classes, and there is one thing they talk about, and only one, and that is salvation. It does not make any difference what the lesson is on. If it was on the leaves that grow on the trees on the banks of the

Jordan, they would talk salvation. It does not make any difference about sticking to the text; they stick to the crowd; the need of the crowd in those missions is salvation, always.

On Sunday night again it is salvation. And during the week we have a tent in operation. This tent we move from place to place in the city.

Now it seems to me, if we can do that, you can do it. It is not that my field is any more peculiar than yours. It is just the same kind of field, and has the same kind of folks.

I believe that the one thing we need to-day is to arise in the strength of the Lord God Almighty and go out to find the lost and bring them to Christ. If we realised what a lost world meant, we could enter somewhat into sympathy with Jesus Christ. Ask God to give you a vision of a lost soul. If you once had that, you would arise and go forth to win men and women and children to the Saviour. Oh, mother, father, pastor, friend—if you want to be transformed, made an evangelist, get on your knees and stay there until God gives you *a vision of lost men*.

III

THE CHURCH AND ITS DOCTRINE

“That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”—EPH. v. 27.

THE Apostle here represents Christ as giving Himself to sanctify and cleanse the Church.

Paul here enjoys the great privilege of a vision of a church to win men for Christ. It is striking that this vision came to him while in prison. Certainly there was nothing in his environment to lead him to such optimism.

A more miserable dungeon one never saw. Sometimes God has had to put His best children in the dirtiest dungeon to get from them their best. John Bunyan would never have stamped himself upon the Christianity of the world had it not been for old Bedford Gaol. The best in most of us is kept back because of the alloy which needs to be burnt

out. God's crucible is sometimes very hot; but if we could only see as He sees, how much easier it would be for us to submit to His refining!

In this vision of Paul's it is well for us to understand that he had reference to no local body or band of believers. It is not my church or denomination, nor is it yours. It is the Holy Catholic Church, the Church Universal, the called-out ones. Pity the man who would attempt to expound this Scripture, and goes no further than the bounds of his own local church or denomination! I do not criticise the local church, nor do I reflect upon the denominational idea—both are essential; but in this connection let us be true to the Scriptures. Paul is speaking of the Bride of Christ. Every honest believer in Christ is a part of this Bride, and is brother to us all. But while the Holy Catholic Church is in the mind of the Apostle, it is also true that the local church is included in the teaching set forth.

It must also be remembered that this vision which he had is ideal. Some hold that it is

42 CHURCH AND ITS DOCTRINE

for the millennium; that the cleansing and sanctifying process is here, while the Bride is presented to Him at His second coming. However this may be, we know that the ideal is the pattern for the present-day Church; that heaven is concerned in the perfecting of the Church militant; that Jesus, its Head, deserves a glorious body.

It is only through the glorious Church that the promises of Divine help are to be realised. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you," is the way to blessing (John xv. 7).

It is also the only Church that commands the respect of the world. The reason Christianity to-day is making such slow progress is because the Church is so indifferent in its life and conduct. The pulpit is equally hampered when it is supported by a church that fellowships with the world. I believe that the lack of power in many a pulpit is because of the church background.

With this much said by way of introduction, we come at once to some thoughts concerning the Church and its Doctrine.

I make no apology for speaking on doc-

trine. I know that it is looked upon as a dry, unnecessary subject. It need not be so. Doctrine is essential to a healthy life. It is just as essential as the framework of a building or the skeleton of a body. Too much skeleton is not good, nor is too much flesh. What we want is proper proportions—a healthy skeleton and a healthy flesh. So with our religion; we must have doctrine—healthy doctrine. I am tired of hearing preachers abuse it. It certainly shows ignorance.

Of course you will not expect me to consider all the shades of Church doctrine; that would take us through the whole Bible. Nor am I to deal with such as mark the distinctions in the general body of the Evangelical Christians. I leave those for consideration at other times and in other ways.

What we shall aim at here is the presentation of certain truths that are fundamental and essential, which must be emphasised, especially at this time.

There are THREE ESSENTIAL TRUTHS which need especial emphasis in a soul-winning church: The Integrity of the Scriptures,

44 CHURCH AND ITS DOCTRINE

the Deity of Christ, and Salvation by the Cross.

I know these are old, but I think that we shall see before we are done that this is the more reason why they should be pressed at this time.

(1) *The Integrity of the Scriptures.* No one with his eyes open can fail to see that there is to-day much war upon the old Book, as we have it. I am sorry to say that this war is most aggressively carried on in our institutions of learning, many of them operating under a Christian name and supported by Christian money. I have watched the trend of the day with reference to this matter with painful interest. I have watched young men in the ministry who have come out of such institutions. I have observed their progress in the work. I have in mind now such a case. I was present at his examination for the ministry. He stated frankly that he did not believe in the inspiration of the Book as a whole. He was finally ordained. His ministry has been a failure. He would have made far better progress in any line of busi-

ness. I have studied carefully the biographies of the great spiritual men of the past. *The men who have moved this world Godward have been men who held fast to the old Book, believed it, preached it, and tried to live by it.*

Christ Himself did not waver concerning the Old Scriptures. Every mooted section of the Old Testament Jesus quoted, or in some way used in His short ministry. He never was heard to doubt the authenticity of any of it. He even quoted "Jonah and the whale" (Matt. xii. 39, 40). Surely where Christ went we may venture to follow! The church or the preacher that does not accept the Scriptures as the whole truth might as well exchange the Bible for any work of philosophy—aye, for a patent medicine almanac, so far as the salvation of this world is concerned!

"But," says one, "I cannot believe; what am I to do?" Quit the pulpit! The failure to sound the certain note is spreading death among the churches and sending souls to perdition. Mere philosophising about salvation will never reach the desired end. Give

46 CHURCH AND ITS DOCTRINE

us the old Book, the Book of our fathers, the Book we believe, the Book we stand on.

(2) The church to win souls must stand squarely and uncompromisingly for *the Deity of Christ*. Never mind if some men say: "He was a good man; perhaps a prophet." The Jews will go that far. Never mind the man who says: "He is Divine, as all men are Divine." The Church of which Paul speaks is a Church that will not have part with any such teaching. *Christ is more than good; He is more than Divine; He is God and man, or He has no part in the Christian system.* I know this is a strong utterance, but we need positive statement.

His Divine Lordship! If this be not true, He, of all men, is most false. Hear His bold "I am!" There is nothing like it in the history of the world.

"I am from above."

"I am not of this world."

"I am the Bread of Life."

"I am the Light of the world."

"I am the Door."

"I am the Good Shepherd."

“I am the Way.”

“I am the Truth.”

“I am the Resurrection and the Life.”

“Before Abraham was, I AM.”

Did Jesus tell the truth, or was He playing the part of a deceiver? If He told the truth, then there is no ground for controversy.

(3) Again, the church to win souls will have but one plank in its platform of salvation—the *Cross of Jesus Christ*. There are two methods of salvation held up to-day: one is the merely ethical; the other, by way of the blood-stained cross. There can be no fellowship between the two. A man is not saved by any sort of ethical process. He may keep every commandment in the Decalogue and more, and still be lost. Christ died on the cross to save men. His salvation is the work of an instant. The Christian life is a process; but salvation itself is instantaneous, when the will of man surrenders to the Christ.

One may be a critic. There may be no other purpose in view; but the moment he, feeling himself a sinner before God, looks by

faith to the cross of Christ, and accepts Him who died upon it as Lord and Master, he is saved.

What a great salvation is this! No wonder the Apostle cried: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3). There is no other system under the sun so wonderful. No philosophy worked out by the genius of man can present such hope as this to a lost and ruined world.

Let the preacher who would win souls preach these truths. Whatever else he may hold, let him not waver on these three essential lines of teaching. No apology will be tolerated. The moment one shows signs of wavering about the Deity of Christ, the Infallibility of Scripture, or Salvation by Grace, *his power to win souls is gone.*

Sinners themselves have no respect for faithless teaching. They are as quick to detect weakness in the doctrine of the preacher as he is himself. They like to hear a Gospel that rings with conviction. It may cut their hearts, but they know it is true.

A man in New York recently said to me:

“The thing that impresses me most is your utter lack of doubt about your position. I cannot accept it as you put it, but your sincere conviction makes me tremble.” I accepted it as a gracious compliment. I had rather have had it said of me than anything else. Above all things, let the preacher and the church not waver in the essential truths of our Christian religion. If there are any doubts, let them be kept in the background until they are settled. And I candidly believe that the doubter should take a long vacation from all preaching until these things *are* settled in his mind.

IV

THE CHURCH AND ITS LIFE

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”—PSA. xci. 1.

NO part of the ninety-first Psalm can be properly considered without taking in the whole. It is a psalm of rich and rare promises. It is for the church as well as the individual.

David is giving his personal opinion of the blessed fruitage of life in the shadow of the Almighty. It was not enough for him to have thrones and armies. These were human, and consequently transitory—the Almighty was from everlasting to everlasting.

He had had experience in the shadow of the Almighty. He had tried everything that the world offered, and it had failed him. Out of his experience he now commends life as lived under the shadow of the Almighty.

We shall always find a strong condition at the foundation of every promise. In this connection the condition is, dwelling in the secret place—" *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*" This is a promise which has far-reaching effects for us all.

The emphasis must certainly be put upon THE CONDITION. The rich promises we have given are not for the world. Only God's dear ones have special privileges with Him. The sheep that strays away from the shepherd must expect only his own strength to rely upon when danger comes. God woos the prodigal at the swine-trough, but feeds him at home. The children are wanted at the Father's house. The Christian or the church that eats with the swine surrenders a feast with the Father. Esau lost his birth-right because he preferred something else. David lost his peace because he chose companionship with sin. Heart-rest and sin never go together. The blessing of God with service for Satan is not possible. God must be all, or He is nothing. To say we will

52 CHURCH AND ITS LIFE

carry sin in one hand means we will let go righteousness with the other. Let us not be content with "standing on the promises"; let us remember that every promise is founded upon a condition. We must have a state before we can get a station.

Having noted the conditions, what are THE PROMISES? The direction of our thought at this time is concerning them; they fire us with aspirations for meeting the conditions.

(1) *Fortification*. "Thou art my refuge and fortress" (Psa. xci. 2). A great king with a great people talking about a refuge! Does it sound cowardly? Not when we know God. Others had their idols, but David's refuge was the Lord God Almighty. How many of us, as individuals, or for our churches, appropriate God as our refuge? The other day I was on a rabbit hunt. I always feel like apologising for hunting rabbits; it is such common sport. After chasing a rabbit for an hour he made for a hole in the ground, where he was perfectly safe from persecuting men and dogs. I could

THE FORTS OF GIBRALTAR 53

but think: "Old fellow, why didn't you go in there at first, and save yourself all this chase?"

How many of us have been like the rabbit! We have been chased by sin and sorrow until we have lost heart, when we might have gone at once to the refuge.

But God is not only a refuge, He is a "refuge and a fortress." How strong this should make us feel! I shall never forget the new grip this thought got on me when our ship sailed into Gibraltar harbour. It was Easter morning. As we came to the mouth of the harbour we cast anchor, hoisted the British flag, and waited for England's mighty fort—the mightiest in all the world—to signal permission for us to pull into the dock. I thought of David's expression, "Thou art my rock and my fortress" (Psa. xxxi. 3). He could not make it any stronger. A fort would be strong, but a fortress is two or more forts. I believe David saw the whole of the Trinity encircling the soul, or the church that abides in the shadow of the Almighty.

Abiding place and a place of defence! God not only furnishes the soul or the church beset with dangers a place for hiding, but also drives back the enemy if he attempts to come nigh. One of the most interesting pictures in the Vatican gallery is that of a shepherd with a spear driving back a lion, while a lamb lies close at his feet. The thought is this: A lamb is attacked by a lion and flees to the shepherd, who is not only his refuge, but his defence. How much like a besieged soul who flees to Christ! "No one shall pluck them out of My hand" (John x. 28).

(2) *Deliverance*. "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence" (Psa. xci. 3). It is good to know that God will take care of us when we are abiding "under the shadow of the Almighty." Many of us think God is willing to fight our battles for us when the war is on. That is true; there can be no doubt about that. Thousands of souls are ready to testify to the strength of God's fortress. They have been eagerly sought by the enemy of souls, and found that God was a safe

refuge and fortress. But this verse gives us more to hope for. It declares that God is a deliverance as well as a refuge. Oh, how many tried and troubled saints can testify that this is true!

I have a man in my church, a deacon, who several years ago was known as one of the worst gamblers and whisky-drinkers going. One night he was induced by some good Christian women to give himself to Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Saviour and Lord. For the time he never thought of his weakness for gambling and drink. Next day the old desire seemed to return. It frightened him for a moment, and then he prayed the Lord to take the thirst away. He declares that the thirst left him at once and has never returned.

This is by no means the only case I could relate. I know of them by the hundred—men and women who have been delivered from the enemy in marvellous ways. What we must remember is, that God uses His own method of deliverance. From one He may take the temptation away, and to another He

may give grace sufficient to master the temptation. We have no right to dictate to God how He shall deliver us. What we want is deliverance, whether it comes by the removal of the cause or by "grace sufficient." Thank God, it is His will to give it.

And my experience is that the world waits to know about this truth. "How am I to withstand this weakness?" is asked by many a poor trembling soul. It is not enough to say in answer to such a question, "Be strong!" The whole mind and body is mastered by depravity. We must preach "deliverance." That is what the lost, degraded, sin-possessed sinner wants to hear, and that Gospel he will heed.

I am as well satisfied of this as I am of any truth; I have seen it hundreds of times. When I have been preaching to sinners and have emphasised the deliverance of God, it has been easy to lead them to Christ. And the church that expects great soul-winning power must hold strongly to this precious truth. Let there be no uncertain note in this matter. Let everybody know that our

God is greater than the “snare of the fowler.”

(3) *Divine Comfort.* “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust” (Psa. cxi. 4). The figure here is that of the mother-hen gathering her young under her wings. There is nothing more pathetic than to see the old bird call her little chicks together and spread over them her broad, soft feathers. She does it when she apprehends danger. She does it to protect them from exposure. She does it also when she wants to rest with them and mother them. What a beautiful figure to illustrate God’s tender affection for His Church! How comforting to us the thought should be! In the life of every man and every church there come times when we feel the need of the special throb of the mother-heart of God. We do not have to wait until we are old, to say, with Elizabeth Gold:

Put your arms around me—

There, like that!

I want a little petting

At life’s setting,

58 CHURCH AND ITS LIFE

For it is harder to be brave
When feeble age comes creeping,
And finds me weeping—
Dear ones gone.
Just a little petting
At life's setting;
For I am old, alone, and tired,
And my life's work is done.

Has life gone hardly with you? Is there no longer any spring-time, with flowers to bloom, and birds to sing? Is it now all winter, with ice and snow? Has some loved one been taken away, and left you with a pining for the days of long ago? Come very close—come into the shadow of the Almighty. He will mother you; His gentle wings of comfort will cover you.

(4) *Conquest*. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Psa. xci. 7). Here we have the thought somewhat changing. At first the Lord was our refuge, and we were consoled with the thought of our personal security. Now we are changed from mere recipients to givers of blessing. We have gained strength in the schooling that we have had:

are we now engaged with God in fighting His battles, and bringing others to know the blessedness of a life in the shadow of the Almighty?

What an inspiration and encouragement it is to know that God can and will use poor sinners saved by grace! During my first visit to London I was invited to speak at a soul-winner's convention. Just after my address the president introduced Mr. Charles Cook, the evangelist of Hyde Park, who came upon the platform and made an address that stirred me from head to heel. When he was through I asked: "Who is this Charles Cook?" The answer was: "Go and see." Later, I was invited to dine with Mr. Cook, and speak at his Hyde Park meeting. At the close of the meeting, which was held in the open air, we went to one of his after-meetings, held in a neighbouring hall. There I saw scores of men accept Christ. I heard scores of others testify of how God had saved them from all sorts of sin. Two other such after-meetings were held by his workers at the same hour in other sections, Mr. Cook going from place

to place directing the work. The whole thing moved with military exactness.

But who is Mr. Cook, the evangelist of Hyde Park? He is a man, who, about forty years ago, was saved from a life of sin, and for thirty years has given his whole life, with such powers as few men in this world have, to the salvation of the non-churchgoers of London. No man in this world that I have ever met impressed me more. He is not a man of the schools—he has cared naught for conventionalities; but he has been abiding in the shadow of the Almighty. Conquering power is not given to strong armies and mighty navies. It is not given to the rich and the learned. These are human, and have their limit. The real conqueror is the man who masters hearts and changes lives. This power is not human: it is for him alone who abides in the shadow of the Almighty.

(5) *Heavenly Companionship.* “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Psa. xci. 11). I shall never forget when this truth first blessed my heart. I had been sick well-nigh

unto death for four months. I was a little better one day, when a warm-hearted Christian friend was admitted to see me. I asked him to read me something from God's Word. He read this Psalm. I specially remember this verse—I shall never forget it; it came to me more sweetly than a mother's kiss: "He shall give His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

Angel watchers! Oh, soul, bowed down, thou hast been living in the shadow; take courage; reach forth the hand of faith. Holy angels bend low above thee. Such a life will have great power, and such a church will be a winner of men.

V

THE CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and . . . he brought him to Jesus.

"The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip. . . . Philip findeth Nathanael."—JOHN i. 41-45.

THE work of the church is varied. Every community has its own difficulties, and every church its own problems. But every church in every community has the one object—the salvation of the lost—in the range of its influence. Other objects may be important. They may press heavily, but never is it to be forgotten that the souls of unsaved people are more important than anything else under the sun. One soul is worth more than a world.

Do not, however, understand me to be indifferent to the world. We must give thought to it, if we would do the best work for souls. I have no patience with sentiment-

talists who are ever harping on soul-winning, and shouting "Glory all the way," and who yet stay away from service when the pastor is announced to preach on "The Housing of the Poor," or "Righteousness in Public Office." Good housing is a part of the church's business. We are our brother's keeper, and so long as a poor tenement district is neglected, and so long as people sicken and die from the effects of it, the church, to do its duty, must give its attention to alleviating such bad conditions. It should be interested in everything that is for the good of humanity. But, after all, let it be understood for ever that *the winning of lost men to Christ* is the main work of the church.

The question with every church realising this fact is: HOW CAN THE CHURCH BE BEST LED INTO THIS WORK?

Taking for granted that the other steps, as far as possible, have been duly considered, let us study a few suggestions concerning the work side of the soul-winning church.

(1) *The Individual Burden.* The one essential thing is, that the church itself shall

64 CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

feel the burden of the work. Every member, as far as possible, should be made to feel his *personal obligation to save the lost*. Andrew found Simon and brought him to Jesus. Philip found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus. This is the way to have a soul-winning church.

The pastor must never cease to urge soul-winning, until he gets his people fired with the responsibility of being Andrews and Philips. Around every church there are opportunities. Lost people are everywhere; we walk with them and talk with them every day. It is ours, therefore, to show a personal interest in their soul's salvation.

The world has seen its opportunity. Business men used to get along without drummers,* but now they are as thick as bumblebees. Once I was spending the night in the mountains. After supper a man came to the home where I was being entertained and asked permission to come in and spend the night. The kind old farmer took him in. Soon we found out what he was, and that his business was selling molasses. Before he left

* Commercial travellers.

next morning he sold that farmer enough molasses to last him through the whole season. There were thirteen children in his home, and that meant a good deal of molasses. The drummer went from house to house until he sold to scores of farmers. Shortly after this the local dealer said to me:

“Can you tell me what has come over this district?”

“Why?” I asked.

“Oh,” said he, “it seems to me that the whole place has turned to molasses. Just look! Every freight car is loaded with it. I have handled molasses until the bees follow me about!” There had been some good personal work done in the district, that was all!

The politicians do the same thing. A few years ago there was a statement made that every doubtful voter in the United States had been seen about his vote for the Presidency. Just so. But we have been waging a campaign for Jesus two thousand years, and there are millions who have never heard of His

66 CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

saving power. Our neighbours and friends, our own families perhaps, are unsaved; and yet we have never made an honest effort to save them.

It is an easy thing to lead souls to Christ when we once make up our minds to get at it. I have some great soul-winners in my church who are not worth much at anything else. They need to be encouraged. Such workers need to feel the pleasure of the work. They are gifted in a very important, indeed *the most* important, purpose of the church.

In one of our meetings in New York there was a woman who had never had much experience in church work. She got fired with the possibility of soul-winning, and she went at it. She invited an unsaved lady friend to spend the night with her. The same night that girl accepted Christ. This was repeated with others for seven nights, and seven young ladies were led to Jesus by her in a week. Any Christian can do this. It is not necessary to wait for the protracted meeting. Do it yourself, and do it now. Get some unsaved soul alone, and go right to work. Get them

HOW TO STIMULATE EFFORT 67

to yield to Christ. Then follow them up until a public confession is made. There are hundreds led to Christ this way by our church workers every year.

(2) *Develop Humble Talent.* Do not rely upon the prominent men and women for everything. Take hold of any member who is willing, and probably you will soon make a prominent member out of him.

I have watched the making of a queen bee in a hive. The bees simply take an ordinary egg and feed it with extra good food and give it special care, and from it they develop the magnificent queen. So in the church. There is ever plenty of material for usefulness. What we want is to give it special opportunity, and it will develop and grow. I find that about all people need is to be made to feel that they can do something for Jesus. They do not realise they can do anything. They are never put on important committees and the like. They feel as if all they are fit for is to hold down a seat and now and then complain that the pastor takes less notice of them than he ought! They feel themselves to be

68 CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

church wedge-wood, and that is about all. It is a sad feeling.

The church that is awake will find something for these people to do, if it is only playing sexton for the mission. They do not mind work; they like it. Give them a job and try them, and you will soon see some fine workers created.

There was a man in our church who was not fit for anything in the church. He was a good fellow, but, like many others, he was good for nothing. One day my assistant, who is a genius at such things, gave him a job of placing the envelopes in the pew-racks every Sunday morning. Never a deacon was fonder of his position. Every Sunday his work was done. It made a new man out of him. Soon he could be counted on for anything. He had it in him all the time, but needed a chance to bring it out.

Another case that comes to me is that of a woman who was hardly known in the church. One day I saw her, and it occurred to me that perhaps there was some way to interest her, so I said: " Won't you get together a few sisters

and have the church windows cleaned?" It was not the windows that I cared about, but I wanted her to feel that she was not overlooked in the work of the church. It worked like a charm. She became one of the very best workers in the church; she is ready for anything. If there is a sinner to be visited, or some work to be done, she can always be counted on.

The point I insist upon is that the soul-winning church must *use its membership*. Do not wait for so-called training. The best training for soul-winning is to do it.

I once asked a man in an after-meeting to speak to somebody. He obeyed at once. He took his Bible and went directly to a young lawyer, and dropped down beside him, saying: "Don't you want to go to heaven?"

"Well," said the lawyer, "I don't know that I do."

"Very well," said the man, "go to hell then!" and he rose and came back to his seat. The lawyer got mad and left the house. The next day he began thinking about it, and said to himself: "That poor ignorant man was

70 CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

doing the best he knew. That is more than I am doing!" The result was, it led him to Christ, and he is now an active Christian. This, no doubt, is an extreme case; but it does not require brains to lead souls to Christ. That ought to be good news to us preachers! The Holy Ghost wants a ready worker. He will supply what we lack, provided we are honest with Him in every matter.

(3) *Create Opportunities.* There is no reason why any church of average strength should not have from a dozen to a hundred soul-winners. Develop them by finding them work to do in missions, cottage-meetings, open air, jails, prisons, etc. It takes very little money to equip a quiet mission so that it can do great work of this kind. A small organ, a few hymn-books, a few seats, a house or a room in a neglected community—this will be a good start. The average city church ought to have from one to a dozen of these places where a Sunday-school is held, and now and then a meeting of several nights in succession. This is our plan, and God has most graciously blessed its adoption.

If the church is in the country the same thing is true. Get the members out into the regions around. Occupy school houses. Get tents and move them from place to place. There is nothing that succeeds like a thoroughly working church, when soul-winning is the chief aim.

It will never do to depend upon the crowd. There has been a time when this could be done with more success than now. Large evangelistic meetings and the like will bring together the crowds, and great good will result in the way of conviction of sin and purifying the atmosphere; but if the individual element is ignored, there will be little permanent good in the way of bringing sinners into the full possession of salvation.

Large meetings should be encouraged. Some men have special gifts in the way of swaying a great crowd. They may not have much gift in the way of individual work. Such men are great blessings to the church. They should not be shunned, but encouraged. What we want is to realise that such meetings need to be accompanied by the personal

72 CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

element. Put into such a meeting, and with such a preacher, scores of personal workers. Have special meetings for such as are touched in the general meetings, and great harvesting will result.

We are never to forget that conviction is not conversion, and conversion in itself is not salvation. There must be a complete surrender to and confession of Jesus Christ. Here is where the personal worker can do his best work. By his timely word or sympathetic interest he often leads the soul over the line into salvation.

VI

THE CHURCH AND ITS PRAYERS

“Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.”

—JAMES iv. 3.

IT has always been very striking to me when studying the life of Jesus, that however busy He was, He was never too busy to pray. However closely he was beset by problems and difficulties, however great might be the press about Him, He never let the opportunity slip by to teach by example and precept the importance of prayer. I think He often left the great crowd and prayed by Himself because He wanted to teach that prayer was more important than anything else.

Just before He preached the Sermon on the Mount He spent the whole night in prayer. It was a great responsibility. It was to be His inaugural address, the announcement of

His platform. He would not enter upon such an important and responsible position without spending much time in prayer. You will remember He did the same thing just before the selection of the Twelve. Jesus realised what an important matter that was. And yet those of us who would not lay claim even to the right to unloose the shoes on the feet of our Lord would dare enter upon the most responsible positions in life without stopping to spend one hour—much less a whole night—in prayer.

Jesus taught His disciples this one thing—viz., how to pray. We imagine preaching is the most important thing in the Christian service. You would have thought that Jesus would only teach the disciples how to preach.

But they went to Him and asked Him to teach them how to pray, and forthwith He did so. Jesus knew so much better than we can ever know that if one masters the secret of prayer, one knows the secret of everything in the spiritual life. If one gets hold of the key of prayer he has the means to unlock the

storehouse of God; and by turning it, he may walk in and help himself. Oh, that men to-day knew how to pray! Oh, that our churches and our missions knew how to talk to God! I fancy, if we did, we should have a much easier time in managing church affairs. I agree with Mr. Moody that the world has yet to see the man that knows how to talk to God.

One day a splendid woman came to me in my church and said:—

“Pastor, I have prayed for one thing for a number of years, and have never got the slightest indication of an answer; yet I know this thing I am praying for is according to the will of God. Why is it I have had no encouragement?”

I said, “I don’t know.” I began to study the matter. Why has God kept silent? Is it treading on too sacred ground to ask God why He does not do a thing? I do not think it is, if we ask it in the right spirit. He is held up to us in the Scriptures as a Father, and I know full well that I do not feel angered or out of patience with my boy when

76 CHURCH AND ITS PRAYERS

he comes to me and asks me the reason for this or that. I love to have him do it, knowing it is the only way I shall ever teach him some things.

Why is it God keeps the answer from us? Something is the matter in much of our prayer to-day, or we should hear more from it. If I send a telegram or a cable from here to my church in Atlanta asking them an important question, and get no answer, I take it for granted that something has gone wrong, or the means of communication have broken down. There is SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS.

Why, then, is our prayer not more effective?

(1) Perhaps in praying, *sin is consciously harboured* in our hearts. David says: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." That is to say, if I am holding on to anything that is wrong, my prayer cannot be heard. When I say that, I do not mean some big sin like lying, murder, stealing, or drunkenness. If I am holding on to *anything* that is contrary to the will of God in my life I might just as well stop praying,

and never make another prayer under the sun—never.

Some years ago a man was walking down the streets of New York on a very warm day, and was seen to fall. When he was examined at the hospital it was thought that he had a tumour in his brain, because he was quite paralysed. However, a surgical operation was performed, and it was found that a small spicular bone not much larger than a pin had caused the paralysis. For years it had been teasing the nerve centres and producing chronic congestion of the brain. The bone was removed, and in three months the man was as well as if nothing had happened.

As I look upon the Church of Jesus Christ to-day—as I look on individuals lives and compare them with what they might be—I am free to say my candid judgment is that we are in a state of paralysis. The Church of Jesus Christ is paralysed. There is no doubt about that. It is alive; it is not dead; but it is simply paralysed. It has lost its strength, its vigour. It is Samson with his

head in the lap of Delilah. It wants to do, it tries to do, it *does* something; but oh, it doesn't begin to touch the hem of the garment of possibility! Paralysed! I feel it as I go out to battle with the sins of the world. Look at the drink traffic. Instead of its growing weaker, it is growing more powerful, and we are as weaklings by the side of this giant.

We may just as well acknowledge the fact that there is something wrong somewhere. If God is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," if the God of Elijah is still in existence, what is the matter? I verily believe that one of the fundamental reasons for the paralysed state of the Church lies in the fact that she is harbouring that which she knows to be contrary to the will of God.

Maybe it is harbouring it in its own fellowship. Here is a man who contributes largely to the expenses of a church, but he is known in the community as unworthy of the fellowship of Jesus Christ. To get rid of that man would be to lose his influence and his money,

so we hold on to his money and to him; and God gives us only what money can buy, and withdraws from us the right arm of His power.

(2) Then I believe we often do not get an answer to our prayers through our *lack of faith*. Faith is a thing we talk about freely at our religious meetings, but where is the man who actually lives by its rule? Where is the church to-day that really lives by faith?

I frankly admit that mine does not. Sometimes we try. Sometimes I think we approach it. Oh, for a church that would live by faith! How it would startle the world! George Müller came very near it; but there are not many like him.

What is faith? Undertaking a thing for God, the end of which you cannot see at the time you undertake it. Ninety per cent. of us demand to see the end before we take the first step. At an official meeting in my own experience it was proposed to enter at once upon the contract for a new church which must be built.

80 CHURCH AND ITS PRAYERS

A business man said: "I will never agree to it until I see where all the money is coming from."

I replied: "That is splendid business, as the world counts it, but it is very poor religion!"

I believe in having religion and business together, but I do not believe in business men coming to the church with one standard when God has already given us another.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In the name of all that is just, I insist that if we run the church by business and not by faith, we should stop singing: "Faith has the victory," and say: "Business has the victory!"

If we are going to walk by faith, let us shut the mouth of the man who is eternally saying: "I cannot do it until I see where the money is coming from."

Sometimes when deacons come to me with long faces because we have dropped behind, I feel like saying: "Brethren, the God that gave us the church and all the other things—cannot you trust Him for two months'

salary for the parson?" Oh, it is so ridiculous. These are the things that hinder us in talking to God. We are so baby-like. God cannot talk baby-talk to us. I believe that to-day He is seeking for the people who will take Him at His word—and then He will speak.

(3) We fail to get answers to prayer, too, because of the *lack of surrender* to the will of God. The one thing we hesitate to do is usually the thing God wants us to do. The average man would rather die than give up his rights, or what he claims to be his rights. We should remember that every right carries with it another—the right to surrender a right for somebody else's sake.

At the Niagara Falls a man who was coming down the river found his boat was in danger of being hurled down the rapids. With mighty strength he pulled his boat to a little island and got hold of a willow limb. He stepped one foot on the rocks; his boat went over the precipice to destruction. As he looked up he saw a sign, "No trespassing

allowed here." He said: "I don't propose to go back yonder!" and started across the land. The owner of this little island met him with a huge bulldog, which went for the man and tore him up badly, and then he was taken before the court for trespass. The decision of the court was: The owner had a right to post his land and to defend it, and to set the dog on the man. But he had another right—the right to surrender his right for that man's life. Because he did not do so, he would be fined so many hundred dollars, or be sent to prison for six months. I suggest that man went out of the dog business before another year was over! There is a great secret underlying this, and A GREAT PRINCIPLE.

Until a Christian man gets to the place where he is willing to surrender even what he has a right to have, he will never know how to enjoy a perfect talk with God. Sometimes I am afraid our self-denial is a kind of Pharisaism. We say we are willing to work with Christ, to sleep with Him out in the cold, to hunger with Him, to suffer with Him.

I believe there are men and women amongst us to-day by the thousand who would actually die for Christ, should need arise. I do not believe the day of martyrs is past. I believe that if there were the same opportunity of testing men as in those days, we could write many volumes like "Foxe's Book of Martyrs."

But, granted that we would be perfectly willing to die before we would surrender principle, or deny Christ—are we equally willing to *live* for Him? It takes a great deal more grace to do that.

There is a sort of heroism in blood. Something gets into a man's nerves when his principle is antagonised that makes him willing to fight to the death for it. But oh, there is no romance about plain, every-day drudgery. There is nothing the world calls heroic in that. Yet it is the most sublime heroism the angels ever looked upon.

We are at the Cross. He is in Gethsemane. Before we can enjoy the power of the Cross we must go by the way of the Garden. Jesus did not go to the Cross until He had

84 CHURCH AND ITS PRAYERS

conquered in Gethsemane. "Not My will," said He, "but Thine, be done." Oh my brother, until we say that, and mean it, and live it, we shall never have a perfectly clear sky between us and God!

VII

THE CHURCH AND ITS EXPERIENCE

“Know ye the Spirit of God.”—I JOHN iv. 2.

WE hear a great deal in these days about experimental Christianity, but we do not hear as much about it as we ought to hear, or as our fathers heard. In their days it was a very much more vital question than it is with us. At the same time, in all Evangelical churches we hear stress laid upon the necessity for experimental religion. Theoretically, no Evangelical church of to-day professes to receive into its membership those who have not had a personal experience with Jesus Christ.

But there is another kind of experience that Christians ought to possess. It is enjoined upon them in the New Testament; and while it is not so vital as the kind just mentioned, it is nevertheless important for the life of the church and the development of the individual

believer. It is about that experience that I desire to speak—the experience referred to by the Apostle John in the text—the experience that every believer ought to have with the Holy Ghost.

Now, John found it necessary in his day to instruct the church concerning the Holy Spirit because there were so many “isms” on every hand. It is needful for you, he said in effect, that you should know the Holy Spirit of God so that you may rightly interpret the workings of the Spirit in your midst.

We find it just as necessary to be so taught to-day. The Church is beset with more “isms” than in the days of John. On every hand we are confronted with them. It is sometimes hard for us to tell which are the workings of Satan and which the workings of the Spirit of God.

There is Christian Science, for example, and Occultism, and New Thought-ism. Some of the “isms” may accomplish, along certain lines, something that is good and helpful, but on other lines they are seen to be very full of heresies and of evil.

Here, then, we have THE TEST OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE.

I feel the importance of this test growing out of our environment. "Know ye the Spirit of God"—having personal experience with the Holy Ghost, so that you will know His workings upon your own heart, and will be enabled to interpret His work in the world.

The Spirit of God is revealed through the Word of God concerning His work in the world. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit should come and abide with the Church for ever. What is the purpose of this abiding Spirit on the earth? What is the purpose of this Third Person of the Godhead; and how may we know to distinguish His work from the work of the Evil One?

(1) The first thing I suggest—and that it is commonplace, I am well aware—is that the Holy Spirit is on the earth in order *to convict sinners of their sin*. "And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." What is the force of the word *convict*? It is one of the strongest words in the English language.

88 CHURCH, ITS EXPERIENCE

Convict is a different word from *convince*. Convincing men of sin is the human way; *convince* is a human word. I think I may take any man and convince him that this or that course of sin is hurtful.

But the Holy Spirit is not here to convince, or to carry on an argument with respect to sin. He is here to do the work man cannot do—to convict, to lock one up, as it were, with his sin, so that he cannot escape. This is the distinctive work of the Holy Ghost. It is a work that neither man nor church can do. All the influence that man may possess can never do a work distinctively given over to the Holy Ghost.

We talk about the coming revival. What we want to do is to fall in line with the great movement of God in all the ages, and the revival is here. The revival will be along the line of the old-time doctrine of conviction of sin. One reason why there are not more conversions is because the work does not start with the Holy Ghost in the heart of the sinner, convicting him of his sin. When you have the Holy Spirit settling down upon

the hearts of sinners and locking them up, as it were, in their sin, until they cry: "Open the door, and let me escape from the body of this death!"—then you will have a revival.

(2) The next work of the Holy Ghost is to take these convicted sinners and *regenerate* them. "Ye must be born again," said Jesus. This "born again" expression is a very significant one. It means a great deal more than conversion. We speak of this and that man as having been converted. Conversion means *a turning from*. I am following a certain course; I stop in my progress, realise that that course is wrong, and turn from it. That may be purely a human work; the Holy Spirit may have nothing to do with it. A reformation, of course, is a very desirable thing, provided the first work and the second work of the Holy Spirit have been done. But if the Holy Spirit has not put in the heart the desire for the change, then that reformation will only last for a time.

I believe it is possible for us, in a purely human way, to "convert" one another. I have seen men "converted" by purely human

instruments. I think I can persuade the average man to turn from sin, to give up his course of wrong, and seek the right. But that is not all we want in the church. The work of the Holy Spirit is to do the convicting of the sinner, and to give him a new heart.

When I first began to preach I used to tell men that before they came to Christ they must give up this, that, and the other. I have given over teaching that. I now tell them to come to Christ as they are, and to let the Holy Spirit work His good work upon them. Then their old ways fall from them as the dead leaves drop from the trees when the new sap begins to rise.

True revival will not be worked up by machinery, but simply by God's people waiting as the disciples waited in the upper room, until He comes and works His purpose in their hearts, so that men will confess Christ because they cannot help it—because of the inworking power that they cannot control.

(3) Then the Holy Spirit *seals the regenerate heart*. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of

God, whereby ye are sealed," said the Apostle. When we ship freight by car-loads there is put on each car a seal, and on that seal the stamp of the railroad company. No man dare touch that seal until the freight reaches its destination.

We are "sealed unto the day of redemption." I thank God that the power that is within us is greater than the power that is without. Oh, trembling soul, are you afraid that the devil will get the victory over God? You may have your property taken from you, and the friends you love may go; but do you know that nothing can happen to you without the permission of God? If we are God's children, the power that dwells within us is greater than the powers that are without us.

Mr. Moody used to say that he never knew a Christian worker whose name was worth being on the roll who was in doubt about his personal salvation. The Holy Spirit, in giving us the assurance of salvation, settles for us the greatest question that ever throbbed in any human breast.

92 CHURCH, ITS EXPERIENCE

(4) It is also the purpose of the Holy Spirit to give up *growth in grace*. The fruit of the Spirit—not fruits, but one great luscious fruit with many component parts—is joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, faith.

The matter of growth in grace is one that is widely talked about among Christians. It is a popular subject in our young people's meetings, and yet it is the one subject, perhaps, about which we know experimentally the least of all. Have you grown in grace since you were saved? Are you any bigger? Is it not a fact that some of us are more joyless, more greedy, more impatient, than we were? Do we bear the fruit of the Spirit—the fruit of joy, for instance? Have we grown in peace, or are we as harassed as ever? Have we grown to be more long-suffering, gentle, good, meek, temperate? God's method of growth in grace is by the Holy Spirit. We are to hand over to Him the chart of our life, and let the Holy Spirit work in us.

(5) The Holy Spirit is also here to enable

us to *interpret the Word of God*. We must have teaching from above.

Some years ago I was in a town in one of the Southern States upon a preaching appointment. The town, which is only a small one, is famed for one of the most magnificent caves to be found in the world. It has beautiful stalagmite and stalactite deposits, and is a wonder even in the Southern States, where there are several similar caves, although none so grand as this. My preaching appointment was in the evening; and in the afternoon a friend suggested a visit to the famous cavern.

Arriving at the cave, our guide presented us each with a little candle, and then we descended something like twenty, thirty, or forty feet. We came into a chamber containing some magnificent formations. But looking at them by the light of my candle I did not see anything very glorious, and I told the guide so.

"You are the first man that ever came into these caves and criticised them," he said.

We went a little further, and I repeated that I did not see anything very striking.

"Well, you are a hard man to please," rejoined the guide.

We went further, and entered what was known as the Audience Chamber. By this time my candle began to flicker, and nearly went out; and, not seeing anything striking, I wished to return. But the guide unwound a long spool of ribbon and touched the end of it with the light of my candle. Instantly there flashed along the cave a light, the brilliancy of which I cannot describe. It was the highest form of magnesium ribbon. One needed the candle no longer—and oh, those stalagmites and stalactites, how gorgeous, how grand! When the ribbon went out, we lit another and another. We needed a poet to describe the wonders and the glories of that cavern as it flashed with light. The lady who was with me took up a piece of iron and played on the hanging stalactites the notes of "Home, Sweet Home." The sound made thus simply seemed as though it were produced by a great pipe organ.

When I got back to my hotel the spiritual application of that all but sacred scene

dawned upon me. I had been ambitious in my youth and desired to be thought an orator, and trusted a great deal to my own intellect. But that light in the cavern seemed to say to me: "You do not know your Bible. You are relying upon your own intellect—that little candle-light—and before you is a great mine, a storehouse of treasure. You have looked at these things with the flickering light of human reason. Surrender your flickering light, your personal judgment, your education, and let it be touched with the great magnesium light of the Holy Ghost; then, indeed, "In His light ye shall see light."

VIII

THE CHURCH AND ITS POWER

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For this promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

—ACTS ii. 38, 39.

I WANT to speak on the subject, “The Power of the Holy Ghost.” One reason why I feel so much exercised with respect to this matter to-day is that I have been made to realise the lack of spiritual power in the churches of this country.

Then I am conscious of the fact that we can do nothing outside the Spirit of God. We may create enthusiasm, but there is nothing lasting in that.

Now examine the setting of this Scripture. Jesus had just commanded His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. They tarried,

and the Spirit of God came upon them. When the Holy Ghost rested upon them it was the Day of Pentecost. Peter was selected to preach the Pentecostal sermon. It is a very ordinary sermon; but upon Peter, and the message he brought, and the people to whom he spoke, the Holy Spirit had been poured out in much power. As he spoke, one would get up and interrupt him, and finally the whole congregation seemed to be seized with a spirit of consternation, and began almost to a man to cry to God for mercy and to Peter for instruction. Peter said: "This marvellous demonstration which you see is the result of the power of the Spirit promised in Joel. The Spirit has come, and we have received Him."

Then they asked: "What shall we do?" Peter replied: "Repent, and be baptised." ("Get religion!" as we say down in the South.) "Then what, Peter?" "Then ye shall receive the gift of the Spirit." This power which you see working upon the audience will come upon you as a gift from God when you have done the other things. Why?

98 CHURCH AND ITS POWER

“Because the promise is to you and your children, and as many as are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

There are two or three things I want to fix on your minds regarding SALVATION AND SERVICE.

This promise of *power is an after-work* to regeneration. These disciples were not enquiring concerning *salvation*; that was not in their minds. They were asking him how they might receive this marvellous *power* which was doing such wonders in the congregation.

The answer is what I want us to grip to-day. It has ever been true in the lives of God's people that what is here distinctly an enduement of power for service was an after-work to salvation. These disciples had been converted and saved before they were ordered to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power. They must be equipped for their special work by the Spirit of God.

Salvation through Christ Jesus comes by faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. I am aware of the fact that people put us down

in the class of so-called Second Blessingists. There are many good men whose shoe-latchets I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose, who, if you were to talk “second blessing” to them, would run. But a man will stand that when he has come to realise the truth of it.

The Apostle demonstrated the fact that it is one thing to be saved, and another thing to be filled or endued with the Holy Ghost for service. I know that it is true in experience. I know when I was converted. I can go to the spot where I met the Lord in the forgiveness of sin. I can also go to Richmond, Va., in the old theatre, and show you the very spot where, later, I accepted and definitely received God the Holy Ghost for service. My heart longs to see the Church of God, not simply standing for the doctrine, but also manifesting it in personal heart-experience—not merely being able to reason out this experience, but standing for it in heart and life.

(2) This power of the Holy Ghost is *for every Christian*—man, woman, and child—who will receive it. Someone will say: “I

am aware that this enduement of power is for the preacher." It is. I do not believe any man ought to preach the Gospel of Jesus until He has received the Holy Ghost for service. I believe it is one of the questions that we ought to insist upon when we ordain a man for the ministry. But let us not assume that it is simply for the preacher—the Apostle teaches that it is for every child of God. It is for them that are afar off, as well as those that are at home. It is for as many as the Lord our God shall call.

You need this supernatural power, which is beyond the explanation of man. When men are made to feel that they are in the presence of Almighty God there is power. And then, mother, with the little tots constantly pulling at your skirts and asking questions that would puzzle the wisest of our philosophers, with the same things to do every day in the same way, looking at the same furniture and the same dishes, and dealing with the same trials day in and day out—oh, I tell you, you need to have with you the Spirit of power, which is both needed and

provided for home as well as pulpit life. The mother presides at the greatest pulpit in the world.

It makes no difference what your profession may be, you may be equipped with this supernatural power. I talked with a young man in Clarksville one day. He said:

“ I remember back yonder in my home-life there was an atmosphere that I never saw in other homes. My mother never made much ado about her religion, but as sure as you live there was that very thing about which you have been preaching. There was the presence of something that followed me, after my mother’s death, until I gave my heart to God.”

Friend, in dealing with church problems, you officials of the church, do you tell me you do not need this equipment of power? Oh, the ten thousand problems in the city church of to-day! We are tried so far that we are about to lose confidence in man. We see men clinging to the “ almighty dollar ” until the church would die and go to perdition if it depended on them. Some give their prayers

and powers, their money and time, almost beyond endurance. Sometimes we give up the fight, and let the devil have the victory.

Brethren, we need this power—and it is for us! Sunday-school teacher and superintendent, accept the power! It is for every child of God who will come up and pay the price and accept the gift. I would like to have that kind of church. I think we have it in theory; I wish we had it more in practice.

How may I, a humble child of God, a woman, a mother, a housekeeper, a clerk, a bookkeeper, a doctor, a lawyer, a private in the ranks of God, a preacher, a singer—HOW MAY I BE ENDUED with this supernatural power?

Not by human energy. Jesus said: "If any man *thirst*, let him come unto Me, and drink; . . . out of his unseen life shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38). He is speaking about the overflowing life—the life of the Spirit. Note the difference between a pump on the street and an artesian well. You do not have to pump the latter.

LIFE OF HUMAN ENERGY 103

This is the difference between the Spirit-life and the life of human energy.

The life of human energy is the life of the churches to-day. If we seek for a revival, we pump, and pump! If we go to raise a little money we have to pump and squeeze, and squeeze and pump. Too often, when we try to do a work for God, if we do it at all, it is done in the energy of the flesh. It's pump—it's hard work; when all the time right here by us God gives us the plan to be filled with the Spirit, so that we shall be like rivers of living water, flowing all the time.

“If any man thirst”—not *desire*, but *thirst!*

A soldier said to me: “Some of us did not have water for three days during a long march. I saw the time I would have given this right arm, I would have let a man cut off my foot, if I could have got a cup of even muddy water.”

The figure used here is not desire, it is thirst. It is such a desire as cannot be satisfied in any other way. It is such a desire that you will give anything in this world to obtain

it—your right arm, your foot, your eye, your money, your friendship, your *everything*—to obtain this one thing needed in Christian experience. Thirst! thirst! thirst! Oh, brethren, the thing that keeps us away from blessing is that we are not willing to pay the price; we will not loose our grip upon the things of the world. There is no reception of the Holy Ghost until a man gets to the point where he gets down and says: “Here, Lord, I surrender all. I will suffer, if need be, that I may be filled with the power of the Spirit to the extent that my life will overflow and touch the lives of others.”

Have we seen our human frailty to the extent that we fall down and say: “God help us, or we perish”? Have we felt that we are undone? Have we felt it as a church? Are we dependent on the church, or the preacher, or the singing, or upon the system? Thirst—*this* is the thought of all others. God help us to feel it!

With the desire, where are we? At the feet of Jesus. How long are we to stay there? Thank God, not long. Some time

ago I was on a street-car riding from the suburb of a large city. There came up a thunderstorm, and the car stopped dead still. I said: "If it does not start soon I will put out for home!" I waited and waited. Finally I got off, and when I was about fifty yards from the house past went the car! Impatience will not work with God. He must say when. Generally we do not have to wait; we have to look up and receive.

Rev. F. B. Meyer puts it this way, for illustration. One day a gentleman called upon another, and they discussed together the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Finally the gentleman of the house said:

"I have endeavoured to receive this promised blessing, but have failed." It was now meal-time, so they both went in and sat down. Tea was the first thing served. Said the host:

"Will you have a cup of tea?"

"Yes," was the reply. The tea was placed by his plate and the conversation proceeded. In a few moments the visitor asked:

"Would you give me a cup of tea?"

106 CHURCH AND ITS POWER

“Why,” said his host, “there is your tea!” In a few moments more the same question was asked, “Would you give me a cup of tea?”

“Why, my friend, there is you tea; why don’t you take it?”

“Ah, well,” said the visitor; “if you have mastered your lesson, I will take it. I have told you that ‘the promised power’ was to be received. You seem to think you had to wait and ask. Now, take!”

This is what we must do. Are we conscious of our needs? Have we come to the place where we are not willing to go any further without the consciousness of the Spirit’s power? Then let us look up, and, by faith, receive!

IX

THE CHURCH AND ITS CO-PARTNERSHIP

“The Holy Ghost—and us.”—ACTS xv. 28.

THERE are two thoughts in this text—the *fact* and the *sphere* of the Spirit’s co-operation. It is our purpose to examine them.

I. THE FACT OF HIS CO-OPERATION.—Much present-day teaching on the Holy Spirit, while good, is one-sided. He is represented too frequently as an independent worker. “Step aside, and let the Spirit work” is popular teaching in many intensely spiritual centres. Nothing is more misleading. God’s plan is “The Holy Ghost, and us.” From the first enunciation of the redemptive scheme, to the close of revelation, God has made clear His purpose to join the Divine with the human.

When Satan entered Eden God could have directly broken in upon the scene and snatched man from his deadly grasp; but instead, He

came to announce that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Nowhere in sacred history do we find God at work because man will not work. Man must complement God. Abraham must journey in the land that he knew not. Moses, too, must organise and lead Israel. Mary must submit herself to the miracle of the Holy Ghost. Jesus must be human as well as Divine. The pre-Spirit dispensation ever reveals God's opportunity at the end of man's extremity. "Roll ye away the stone," was our Lord's instruction before the resurrection of Lazarus. This He could have done, but it belonged to man to act.

The dispensation of the Spirit is the same. His coming did not introduce a new order; it merely set forth a new Person. The experience of every Christian should be the experience of Jesus: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). Nowhere is God pledged to do His work and ours too. The man who says, "Stand aside, and let the Holy Ghost work," casts not only a slur upon man, as the creature of God, but mis-

represents also the plan of God to use him. The great electric dynamo, throwing out power enough to shake a city, must be complemented by the equaliser. In the utilisation of electricity one is as essential as another. When one starts, the other starts; and when one stops, the other stops. To change this order would mean the misuse of the power. The Holy Ghost must have the equaliser.

If the church prays for guidance, it must open its eyes to see the pointing of His finger. If the soul, lost in a wilderness of perplexity, shall pray for the way of light and life, it must look for the way, and be prepared to walk therein. Moses must stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. How blessed this command! It could not be made to some people any better, unless it read, "Sit down, and see the salvation of the Lord." God never said, "Keep on standing." The commandment to "Stand still" was only the lull before the thunder's crash; it was silence when God revealed Himself. Then came the perilous march, followed by conflicts of blood.

The administration of the Holy Ghost is not different from any other. He must join Himself to men. On the Day of Pentecost He became incarnate in the Church. To be ever Spirit-guided and Spirit-empowered one must not only give the Spirit His place to work, but otherwise recognise His place in the work. A fully Spirit-guided church is one whose energies are spent in proportion to its gifts. The more the gift, the more the requirement. Pious talkers, saintly lookers, and loud shouters are not necessarily to be taken as the most Spirit-guided ones in the church. With such expressions of saintliness there must be muscle and blood.

To talk of the rest of faith while there is abhorrence of work is grievous to God and disheartening to man. It is no use to depend on God the Spirit to do anything for us which we are not ready to go our full length to bring to pass.

II. THE SPHERE OF THE SPIRIT.—In the case of the text He is concerned about the instruction of the Church in the line of church ethics. There is nothing that touches

the welfare of the race of humanity that He is not interested in.

(1) He desires co-operation in the work of *testimony*. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts i. 8). Nothing is more important in the work of Christ than testimony. A rousing, good testimony meeting is worth more to bring sinners to Christ than the most eloquent sermon.

I was in a tent in London when a little woman told the story of her life; and while she talked scores of sinners came out for Christ. McAuley's Mission in New York saves more drunkards than all the churches in the city. The mission stands for two things—the blood of Christ for salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit for power—that one may be saved and not testify, but he cannot be baptised with the Holy Ghost and keep quiet. Such is the teaching of the Scripture: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be *witnesses unto Me*."

"Shall," not "ought." This accounts for

the dead prayer meetings; there is no spiritual testimony, because the Holy Ghost is not come upon them. In most cases His baptism is not preached. We work our machinery, but there is friction. Power is lacking because there is not the Spirit of power.

Do not limit the word "witness" to verbal testimony. Literally it means, "show forth." There are thousands of ways to show forth Christ—in the home, in society, in business, everywhere we go. The promise is that we shall show Him forth in our life when the Holy Ghost is come upon us. Oh, what a power a church becomes when it yields itself to the Spirit! Then our testimony and our life will count for what we are and what He is.

(2) The Holy Ghost desires our co-operation in the work of *instruction*. To suppose that he is only concerned about the work of salvation and sanctification is to deny His place in the Godhead. There is no work of God's hands that He is not interested in. David gave forth the right conception of the Spirit when he said: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from

Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me " (Psa. cxxxix. 7-10). The Holy Spirit cannot be locked in a corner. His interest is as broad as humanity, and His Church is as comprehensive as humanity's needs. All education is sacred, and a church has no right to turn it over to the Christless State. Strictly speaking, a Christian parent has no right to patronise the public school where Christ is prohibited by its constitution.

A church, to fill its mission, must provide education around the Cross. From the alphabet to the telescope the blood of the Cross must show forth. This is why my own church is institutional. It is why we believe in operating schools, lecture courses, musical entertainments, charity benefits, and the like. Christ came not only to save souls, but to redeem every faculty of man's being and every fibre of his nature.

The world must not be given the entertainment and culture of the mind while the Spirit seeks the development of the soul. The Spirit wills provision for the needs of man—the whole man, both soul and body. It is just as compatible with the sphere of the Holy Ghost, though not so important, that I should pray for His co-operation in popular lectures on right lines as it is to seek Him for soul-winning. It is the whole man we seek.

Thus (3) He desires co-operation in the *work for humanity*. Jesus was moved by humanity's needs. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, and comforted the sorrowing. The work of humanity was never His most important work—primarily He came to save lost souls; but in saving lost souls He would also redeem lost bodies and comfort sad hearts. Surely the Holy Ghost is likewise concerned in the religion of humanisation. To claim His power and His guidance while we shut our ears to the piteous cries of the suffering, or to attempt to satisfy justice by turning it all over to the State, is contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

Almshouses, hospitals, homes for the needy, asylums, reformatories for young criminals—all such work is the sphere of the Spirit's co-operation with the church. Fancy a completely Spirit-guided church or individual by consent handing on to the State, which cannot admit Christ, all such work! Such a thing is impossible. The Spirit wants us to consent to no work of humanity that does not admit Christ. The State may have as much as it will, but in no sense is the church excused from having its own Christ-possessed and blood-sprinkled work to relieve the distress of mankind.

Oh, do not limit the Holy Ghost! He wants to enlarge us, rather than have us attempt to contract Him. Do not be afraid to ask the Holy Ghost into any work that is for humanity's needs. The dear Lord save us from the mistake so many people fall into—that of communing with ourselves, while all around us humanity groans, and the Holy Spirit waits for a hand of co-operation! Let us never imagine that the baptism of the Spirit is to lessen our sympathy and common-sense.

X

THE CHURCH AND ITS FINAL HOPE

“Surely I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”—REV. xxii. 20.

THE two great keys for the unlocking of the Scriptures are a proper conception of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and of the return of our Lord. Since these truths flashed upon my mind there has been an entirely different insight into all other Scripture. We shall consider presently, in a brief way, the Spirit; but first, briefly, let us consider our Lord's return. Of course, in a short space we cannot properly cover this field; and our only hope is to put as concisely as possible the true Scriptural teaching on this great question, believing firmly that in the proper understanding of this matter lies a strong reviving power.

There are *three great comings* foretold in Scripture.

I. THE COMING OF CHRIST to atone for

sin. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. iii. 15). From this promise onward the world had its eye turned towards its fulfilment. Every sacrifice pointed to it, and every act of worship centred in it.

Not only was His coming foretold, but also the *manner* in which He was to come. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." How minutely the Spirit reveals His plans: "A *virgin* shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. vii. 14)!

Further, the *place of His birth*. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2).

Bethlehem! Who would have thought it?

And yet the Spirit of God enabled the prophet to see it.

Also the *conduct of the people* was foretold. "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord" (Isa. lx. 6).

These prophecies have all been fulfilled, and that literally. What reliance they should give us upon the plain Word of God! Surely it is so plain that all may understand, whether they have given "a rule of interpretation" or not.

II. The second great coming was that of THE HOLY SPIRIT. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit" (Joel ii. 28, 29). This has been fulfilled.

III. Now the third great coming is the

RETURN OF OUR LORD. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

This is yet to be fulfilled. The Apostles believed it. Paul refers to it more than fifty times. It was the great inspiration to him in his work, that he lived in daily expectation of Christ's return. But since his day Christian people have not placed so much stress upon it, especially in later times.

I think this is because of an erroneous idea as to the time and purpose of His return. There are two classes of believers: Those who believe He will return after the millennium—hence they are called *post-millennialists*. They believe the world is to be converted, and the millennium is to precede His return to the earth. Then, too, those who believe the world is not to be converted before He comes, and that the millennium occurs when He comes. These are called *pre-millennialists*.

Now this is practically the difference between Christians about the matter of our Lord's return. You ask, then, what difference does it make? Well, it makes just this much difference: if the Scriptures teach the truth about it, we ought to know the truth, and teach it.

What then, saith the Scripture? They are very plain in support of Christ's pre-millennial coming; that is, that we are to look for Him before the world is converted, which means any time; and also that when He comes, He will raise the saved dead, and change the saved living; and reign with them a period on earth, during which Satan will be chained and shut up in the pit, and the will of God be done "on earth as it is in heaven."

As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come (MATT. xxiv. 37-42).

Christ is speaking of His return. “As in the days of Noah.” We all know how it was then. The world was not converted then. “So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.”

This does not suggest to me that the world is to be converted before He comes. “Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” All are not to be converted, else it would be foolish to begin watching until they are.

It is clear, therefore, that we may expect Him *at any moment*.

THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS. Now let us take another step, keeping to the Scriptures. What will He do when He comes?

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even

so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep.

For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 THESS. iv. 13-18).

Paul is here preaching on the second coming of our Lord. He looks upon it as a great means of comforting the saints. Why, then, should we look upon it as non-essential?

Let us look more carefully at what Paul says:

(a) That Christ will come in the clouds;
(b) that the dead in Christ shall rise first;
(c) that the living in Christ, and the raised dead in Christ, shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

What a glorious thought: the bride going up to meet the Bridegroom! All these years He has been waiting for her to be made

ready. She has been so slow, but now she is ready, and He comes, and she meets Him in the air. The marriage-supper is celebrated. What a gracious hour—CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE UNITED!

And this union comes, not when the world is converted, but *when the bride is ready*. Hence our business is to help to get her ready, that we may hasten His coming. Oh, give us a hundred thousand missionaries to go to the uttermost parts of the earth to preach the Gospel, and get ready the bride of Christ, and thus to hasten His glorious return!

But this is not all. When Christ and His bride are united in the air, then they will come back to the earth:—

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which

had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (REV. XX. 1-6).

The thought, to my mind, is this: Christ must bring His bride back here on, as it were, their bridal tour. She has never seen this world in its real beauty. Sin has blighted and blurred it. Jesus is going to let His bride see what a world this is, and so He sends an angel down to prepare for the coming. His orders are, The devil must be chained, put in the pit, and shut up. He will not allow him to roam the new earth now. Then will come the bridal party to the "new earth."

What a great time! The devil in hell, where he belongs! No more deceptions; no more heartaches and crying! The devil is silenced!

This is what we call THE MILLENNIUM.

It is the answer to the prayer of Christ, which was given as our pattern: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven." This could never occur until Satan is out of the way. Glorious reign of peace and victory! Sure enough, "a new heaven and a new earth"!

But what of the THE WICKED DEAD? We read:—

The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. . . . Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. . . . They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Rev. xx. 5, 6).

Oh, glorious truth! No wonder Paul said, "Comfort one another with these words."

Note, therefore, that—Christ is coming back to the earth. He may be expected before the world is converted. When He comes, the dead in Christ will rise first; and the living in Christ and the raised dead in Christ will reign with Him on earth. During this period of reign the devil will be shut up. This is our claim, and upon it we are

building our hope, through the blessed Christ.

WHAT SHOULD FOLLOW? This is a perfectly natural question. Unless there is here some practical significance, it is time wasted to convince the world of these truths, namely—

(a) The possibility of an immediate coming of our Lord ought to make us *look well to our own hearts*. Suppose to-night He should come—am I ready? What a stimulus to heart-searching!—*Am I ready?*

(b) *Are those I love ready?* Think of the babe going to meet the Lord, taken from the mother's lap perhaps, and the mother left! Such a sad thought! Friend, are your loved ones ready?

(c) *How about my sheaves?* Have I been faithful in telling others at home and abroad? Oh, solemn reflection!

God help us to be ready, "for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man, cometh"!

XI

THE CHURCH AND ITS FELLOWSHIP

“Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell.”—EPH. v. 2.

IN this text the Apostle is urging the brotherhood and sisterhood to “love one another.” It is very important teaching. No church can win souls where it is lacking. Our purpose, therefore, is to take up the subject and study it.

There are two general thoughts concerning it:

1. The potency of love.
2. The manner in which love is to express itself, especially in the church.

As to the potency of love, we see it everywhere exemplified. There is not a man or a woman who has not felt its power.

Take for example, conjugal love: Where is the man or the woman who has not at some time felt its throb?

I, myself, have had some little experience in it. How I was willing to endure, sit up half the night, or all night, if necessary. How I was willing to walk one mile or five miles, or all the miles. How I was willing to endure all sorts of hardships along the walk, cold and heat, light and darkness.

I remember one time starting off on a little tramp of this kind when there was a terrible freeze. When I reached the creek I found I had to cross it on a foot log. The stream was frozen over. It was very cold, and it took a great deal of fire on the inside to make me attempt such a task. About half way across the log I slipped, went in, and got wet. But I was not to be stopped.

I went back home and changed my clothes, came back with renewed determination, tackled the foot log again, and landed safely on the other side.

There is the love of the parent for the child. Who has not seen and felt love there?

I read a description of it recently in connection with the reports from Port Arthur. A Russian mother, who lived in the fort, had

a son in the army. In the thickest of the fight news came to her that he had been wounded unto death; and that he was still in the trenches. Immediately she made a break through shot and shell to that boy. She paid no attention to the pickets or officers. The result was she was shot herself in the right arm. Crawling on her knees and dragging her limp arm in the dirt, she went through that line and reached the boy just in time to give him a mother's kiss before he died.

That is mother's love. There is nothing human that measures up to her love.

Then there is the love of the child for the parent.

I think the prettiest description of this I ever read is in "The Clansman." A young man is described who has just received from his mother a home-made colonel's uniform with a sash she had worked with her own hands. Immediately after he put it on, he was forced into battle.

In the midst of the battle the whole regiment retreated and left him fighting the enemy alone. He saw his flag lying in the

dirt, and, taking it in his hand, he made one tremendous leap and shoved it down the mouth of the enemy's cannon. He was wounded, picked up, and carried to the hospital.

His mother went to see him. She attempted at first to remonstrate with him for such reckless fighting. Then, with tears running down his cheeks, and with a kind of smile he said, "Mother, how could a boy retreat wearing a new uniform made by his mother's fingers?"

That is the potency of the love of child to parent.

Now the church to-day that is actuated by love will succeed in impressing itself upon the world.

Many of you have read the story of the boy in Chicago, who lived a distance of five miles from Sunday School. A policeman watched him pass his beat every Sunday morning, through cold and heat, sunshine and rain. He said, one morning, "Where are you going, to work?" The boy replied, "I am not going to work; I am going to the Sun-

day School and church. I am going to Mr. Moody's Sunday School and church." The policeman said, "Why do you go so far when there are hundreds of churches between there and where you live?" "Yes, sir," said the boy, "but they love a fellow over there."

That is what the world wants to-day of the church. All the talk of the church simply expressing itself in rescuing men from hell and getting them to heaven is good, but in fulfilling this mission the earth is to be made like heaven. We are to take hold of men in this life and make them feel the throb of a new heart of love.

So much for the general potency of love. I want now to dwell more largely upon the manner of love's expression.

There is a great deal in the way love expresses itself. No man will go up to a girl when he wants to tell her he loves her, and say in cold blood, "I love you." There is everything in the way the heart expresses itself. Just so with respect to the manner in which love expresses itself in the church. I believe there are men and women in the

church that love humanity with a deep heart, but who are lacking in the way in which the heart of love expresses itself. It seems that the apostle recognizes this defect and attempts to strike at it.

1. We are to express our love by putting aside "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing." Now the church that is living in the midst of bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor is the church where love does not reign, for love does not express itself in that way. The world knows this and does not want to get into a loveless church.

I have in mind a church that might have been a mighty power for God, but lost its opportunity by wrangling and clamoring. Their church conferences were actually like a show. The world on the outside would say, "When are you going to have a church conference? What do you charge for admission?" They wanted to get there and see the "fur fly."

Sometimes I think it would be far better if the church had no business meetings of any

kind, and yet I am aware of the fact that we have to have business transactions for God.

2. We are to show our love by abstaining from "evil speaking." You cannot fool the world with respect to this matter. There can be no Holy Spirit leadership where there is constant evil talking about one another.

Not long since I read an account of a man's conception of tattling church members. He drew a picture of the scene at the table where the rich man and Lazarus were—Lazarus eating the crumbs, and the dogs licking his sores. Then he said, "You people in the church that are constantly talking about one another remind me of those dogs."

I have known people whose usefulness was lost by this sin. It is a habit that will grow. When we once begin that kind of thing there is no end to it.

3. Then again, he says we are to show our love by being "tender-hearted and affectionate." Now this to some people is a very great hardship. It ought not to be, for the spirit of Christ indwelling, will make it easy for us. Forgiveness is a thing people do not

like to have talked about, for it most generally strikes a very sensitive spot in our hearts. But without forgiveness there is no heaven. It may be hard for us to forgive, but it will be harder for us to be lost. Read the account of our Lord's first dealing with his disciples concerning the matter of prayer, when He gave them the pattern prayer:

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your heavenly father forgive your trespasses." So you see if there is unforgiveness in our hearts toward our fellow men the door of heaven is locked against us forever.

Here is a man who says, "that man has done me an injury. I wish I could forgive him, but I can't." Yet that man will go to prayer-meeting and pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." He is asking God not to forgive his trespasses, for he has not forgiven them that trespass against him. You had better go to heaven a prayerless saint, if there is such a thing, than to ask God to forgive your trespasses as you forgive them that

trespass against you, when you will not forgive.

But there is another thing about this forgiveness that I want to impress: We are to forgive "as God for Christ's sake forgave us." It seems that when we look at it from that standpoint it would be much easier. That man against whom you hold something in your heart may not deserve forgiveness, but listen: You did not deserve God's forgiveness. You will pardon me for giving an illustration out of my own experience.

There was a man in my church who had been a notorious drunkard. He was saved. After awhile he had a difficulty with another brother in the church. In a short time after the difficulty the first mentioned brother began to talk about the other man. As a result, there grew up animosity between the two men. I went to the first and said, "Don't you think you ought to forgive that man." He said, "How can I forgive him? he has done everything in the world to ruin my character and damage my business." I said, "But you can forgive him for Christ's

sake. Remember that God forgave you for Christ's sake. You had done everything in your power to damn God's cause and damn God's church, and yet, God, looking down upon you and seeing Christ's love for you, said, 'I will forgive him.'" Then he thought a moment and said, "I have been a pretty bad sinner, haven't I?" I said, "Yes, you have sinned against God a thousand times more than that man has sinned against you, and if God, for Christ's sake, forgave you, shame upon you, as a Christian, that you cannot, for Christ's sake, forgive that man." He said, "I will do it," and he did it.

Here is a man who says, "I am sure I do not have anything in my heart against anybody." You know that is one of the most insidious ways the devil has of damning the spiritual life of people. If he can just get a man to say, "I am right, and I have nothing against anybody at all, he is at outs with me," he is satisfied. I want you to hear Jesus Christ. He says, "When thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught *against thee*, leave

there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

The Apostle not only proposes that we shall forgive with reference to past acts, but that we are to walk as God's children. We are to express this past forgiveness in the present and future walk of our lives. This is very essential to keep in mind. Some people flatter themselves that they have done some such acts, and they can be excused for various things in the life to come. Paul's teaching is that we are to walk, day by day, in love.

What would be the effect upon the church that observes this teaching? What would be the effect upon the church that loved this way? In the first place, we would regard our brother's interest as sacredly as we regard our own. Would not that be delightful? Would not it be blessed to have this city peep in upon our church and say, "There is a crowd of people that are so spiritually on fire that they regard one another's interest with the same degree of earnestness and interest that they regard their own." You say, "You

will never see that in this business age." Yes, that is not the spirit of the age, but it is the way the church should live. Listen again: If this were true we would never take advantage of our brother in any transaction, and never allow anybody else to do it, if we could prevent it. Would not that be delightful? Would not it be delightful for our membership to adopt such a standard as that?

Then were this true we would regard our brother's good name with the same sacredness and interest with which we regard our own. Would it not be grand and glorious to have such a church, made up of all shades and ranks of social and business life, come together upon such a basis as that? Would it not be good to feel that we were in a church that would die rather than let us be misrepresented? There are some churches into which I should very much hate to go. I should be afraid of my reputation. Would it not be blessed if the girls, coming to the city for work or for school, could say, "Well, I am constantly liable to be misrepresented, and I want to go somewhere, to get protection.

Mother is dead and father is dead, and I have nobody else to look after me, and I want somebody to protect me so long as I am straight." Would it not be blessed if they could say, "There is one place where I know they will do it" ?

If this were true, when our brother goes astray we would go after him. Not with a club—that is the way we have been doing, perhaps—but we would go with love and woo him back. Or if our sister goes astray we would do the same thing. Do you not know that the church goes after a man, sometimes with love, and brings him back, but when a woman goes astray, all backs are turned?

The last thing I want to say is this: It would mean that our greatest pleasure would be our brother's good, and not our own. You say that is not natural. It is not natural, but it is Divine. I maintain that the man who is governed by that principle is going to get all he needs. It is in keeping with what Jesus said: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

In the early days of my ministry we waked up to the fact that one of our most popular and active girls in the church had gone to the bad. Of course it was the cause of much regret and sorrow. Everybody in the church said, "Turn her out." When the deacons met the first night after the talk had gone the rounds of the community, they said, "Turn her out." I said, "Let's not do it that way." We went about it in the Scriptural way.

One morning after preaching, I stepped down from the platform and made a proposition. You could not have made me believe that she would have looked out upon the world, but she had come in and taken a seat behind the door. I gave the invitation for anybody who wanted to get back to God, to come forward and give me their hand. After awhile I heard a scream, and I saw her coming. She was crying, and when she took hold of my hand, she fell down upon her knees and began to pray. I thought to myself, "this church will wish they were at home." Men and women began to hang their heads and feel that they were disgraced. But the

young people in the house seemed to look differently. She had at one time been the leading voice in the choir. They were the ones that were hurt most by her conduct. I felt for the choir, and while I stood there weeping myself, I heard a noise from behind me, and I looked, and coming from the choir were about fifteen young women, led by one of the best women God ever gave a church. Then came too, the young men, without a word being said—nothing worked up. One after another they took her hand.

That was religion. It is just what God demands. It is just the kind God wants. It is what will make a "Soul-Winning Church."

The International Pulpit

A New Series of Sermons and Essays representing mines of thought and illustration from some of the keenest thinkers of the day. Issued at a uniform popular price,—\$1.00 net.

The Loom of Providence. By Robert Mackenzie, D.D., Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York.

These sermons aim to call attention to some of the abiding principles that mark God's method with us in providence and in grace, and to do so in such a manner as would enlist the attention and the memory of active, thinking, business men.

The Modern Crisis in Religion. By George C. Lorimer, D. D.

Dr. Lorimer is thoroughly familiar with religious conditions both at home and abroad, and moreover has the happy faculty of seeing just the point in the problems of the day that the average man is interested in. That there is a crisis in the affairs of organized religion is certain, and what Dr. Lorimer has to say is from broad vision and right to the point.

City Temple Sermons. By R. J. Campbell. (Joseph Parker's successor.)

"Almost every page contains paragraphs which it seems one must quote—a rare compliment to any man."—*The Observer*.

"The keynote is that of personal devotion to Christ and it opens doors of suggestion wherever it is applied along the line of human experience and need."—*The Congregationalist*.

The Reproach of Christ. By W. J. Dawson. Introduction by Newell Dwight Hillis.

"The sermons are marked by a literary quality, combined with earnest evangelistic zeal. . . . Models of homiletic construction."—*Church Economist*.

"In point of ethical, spiritual and literary merit these rank among the best of modern sermons."—*Outlook*.

The Blind Spot and other Sermons. By W. L. Watkinson, D.D.

"Eighteen excellent sermons, not too long, learned but not tiresome, full of evangelical truth and piety. These sermons are delightful reading, and would be a help to clergymen who are getting into a rut in preaching. The author's knowledge of natural history makes his illustrations fresh and attractive."—*The Living Church*.

"These are all sermons for the times, some of them in their choice of subject and method of application, all by relation to the permanent needs and longings of the human heart."—*Congregationalist*.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, Publishers

Christ's Life and Teachings

The Crises of the Christ. By G. Campbell Morgan, D.D.
Popular Edition, Third Printing, cloth, \$1.50, net.

"Remarkable for its delineations of the character of Christ and for its description of influences brought to bear upon him on many important and impressive occasions of his life."—*Herald and Presbyterian*.

The Fact of Christ. An Irresistible Appeal to the Intellect.
By P. Carnegie Simpson. *4th Edition, cloth, \$1.25.*

"A new and forceful statement of the fact and claim of Christianity. To me it is one of the finest statements of the atonement principle that I have ever read."—*G. Campbell Morgan*.

The Story of the Nazarene. A Layman's Life of Christ. By Prof. Noah K. Davis (*Univ. of Va.*), Maps and Illustrations, cloth, \$1.75, net.

"Probably the most straightforward and readable account of the life of Christ issued. It puts the events into modern setting and literary form and making the scenes vivid and real. . . . Makes the story accurate as history and interesting as fiction."—*Watchman*.

Bible Studies in the Life of Christ. Historical and Constructive. By Henry T. Sell, D.D., paper, 25 cents, net, cloth, 50 cents, net.

"Practical, historical and constructive and specially suited for class work. The setting and background of the discourses, parables and miracles is given. Places are graphically described. The course of events is marked out. . . . All is done in a brief, concise and interesting way."—*Book News*.

A History of the Preparation of the World for Christ. *Fifth Edition, Revised.* By David R. Breed, D.D., cloth, gilt top, \$2.00.

"In broad effectiveness of historical portrayal he is a master. He brings to bear the arts of the pulpit on historical narrative, without taking into this field too much of rhetorical peculiarities."—*S. S. Times*.

The Principles of Jesus. In Some Applications to Present Life. By Robert E. Speer, cloth, 80cts., net.

"The principles of Jesus as bearing on character and conduct in religious, social, civic, and economic relations are here exhibited as the guide of life to-day. It is simple, lucid, and wholesome, suited for Bible-class study."—*The Outlook*.

The Twentieth Century New Testament in Modern English. New One Volume Edition. *100,000th, cloth, \$1.00, net.*

"Put into the language that we speak every day—plain language—it comes to one with new and added power—a fresh, racy translation—*The New Testament can now be comprehended by the plainest man.*"—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, Publishers

[illegible]

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

NEC

CINCINNATI CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



3 4320 00218 5645

**"If It's a Religious Book
Try Blessings"**

Blessing Book Stores, Inc.

